

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 21 July 2019. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

The Redemption Report

1 Peter 1:17-21

In last week's message, we learned about three sets of "students" who have studied the Gospel message. Those students were the Old Testament prophets; the Apostles; and the angels.

Now, as we studied about the Apostles, we learned that the Apostles not only were *students* of the Gospel: they were also *reporters* of the Gospel. In **verse 12**, Peter reminded his readers of the fact that he and the other Apostles had "***reported...the gospel***" to them. The Apostles were well qualified to report the Gospel message, because they had *seen* the Gospel unfold before their very eyes. They had personally witnessed Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. However, just as importantly, they had *studied* the prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures. Armed with the Scriptures, and with their own eyewitness testimonies of what they had seen and heard, they *reported* the Gospel to the world.

Now, any time a reporter gives a report, there are several questions that he is expected to answer. The usual questions are: "Who, what, where, when, why, and how?" In the passage of Scripture that we will be reading today, Peter gives us a "report" concerning our redemption; and he tells us how this wonderful redemption affects our lives. This morning, we will examine the "Who, what, where, when, why, and how" of redemption. The title of this message is ***The Redemption Report***.

Read 1 Peter 1:17-21.

At the end of **verse 17**, Peter gives us a command from the Lord. That command is to "***pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.***" Everything that Peter says in this passage revolves around this command. However, before we examine this command, there is something important that we need to know:

I. To whom is the command given? (v. 17)

In the first part of **verse 17**, Peter makes it clear whom he is addressing. He says, "***And if ye call on the Father...pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.***" In other words, Peter is saying: "Those of you who call on the Father...listen up. I'm talking to *you*." Simply put, Peter is addressing everyone in his audience who is truly *saved*. If you call on the Father, then this is an indication that you are truly a *Christian*. A true child of God regards God as His Father, and calls upon the Father's name in prayer. A person who claims to be saved, yet does not pray to the Father, is no true child of God! He has no relationship with God.

Now, this raises an important question: When does one's relationship with the Father begin? When does God become "Father" to an individual? Well, the Bible makes it clear that a person is not a "child of God" simply because he was created by God. The Father-child relationship begins at the moment a sinner humbles himself, calls upon the Lord to be saved, and believes with all his heart that Jesus died for his sins, and rose again. **John 1:12** says, "***But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.***" Lest there be any question as to *how* to "*receive*" Jesus, Paul

answers that question clearly. To **“receive”** the Lord Jesus Christ means to place your complete trust in Christ’s death for your sin, and in His resurrection from the grave. It means to stop trusting in your own righteousness, and to trust instead in Christ and His righteousness.

Read Romans 10:9-17.

Those who truly call upon the name of the Lord to be saved are placing their trust in the **Gospel**. According to **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**, the “Gospel” is the message that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. Those who add anything else to the Gospel have *not* truly believed the Gospel; and they have not truly called on the name of the Lord for salvation.

Let’s get more specific. Let’s say that a lost person prays to the Father to ask Him for help with a temporal need in this life (such as getting through a sickness, or getting a needed job, or getting through some hard time in his life). Can God be merciful to that person (even though he is lost), and answer his prayer? Yes! The Bible says that God causes the sun to rise, and the rain to fall, on both the **“just”** (the saved), *and* on the **“unjust”** (the unsaved). God is often merciful even to lost people; but this doesn’t mean that they are pardoned, or saved from their sin. Being healed of a physical sickness, or being saved from physical death in an accident, or being shown mercy during a hard time in your life, does *not* mean that you have been saved: it simply means that God has been *merciful* to you. God may show a lost person His goodness in some earthly matter; but God’s goodness should lead sinners to *repentance*.

My friend, perhaps this applies to *you*. Perhaps *you* would point to a situation in your life and say, “Oh, I know I’m saved, because I was going through a terrible situation, and God got me through it.” If this be your idea of “salvation,” then you are *not* saved! God is not Father to those who have not placed their complete trust in Jesus alone! The Bible says that you must *believe* with your heart that Jesus’ death for your sins, and resurrection from the grave, is all that you need to be saved; and you must personally *ask* Him to save you! If you have never truly believed, in your heart, that Jesus paid your *complete* sin debt; and if you have never called upon the Father to ask Him to save you from *all* your sins, then I urge you to do so! The Bible says, **“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”**

A true child of God calls upon the Father. A true child of God also regards God as His Judge. (**Read 1 Peter 1:17 again.**) I don’t know how many times I’ve talked with people who claim to be Christians, yet who do not really believe that God will judge them. They say, “I don’t believe in judgment. After all, God is love. He would never judge us, or send anyone to hell.” My friend, if you do not believe that God will judge you, you are woefully wrong. God *will* judge you; and as a righteous Judge, He will not respect your person. God is not like a corrupt Garda officer, who lets certain people off the hook for running a red light because they are his personal friends. God will not wink and wave you on through the pearly gates because you were from a “good family,” or because you were regarded as a “good person” by everyone around you. **Ecclesiastes 12:14** says, **“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”** Every work that you’ve done will be judged, without partiality; and God will judge according to *His* standard.

Read John 12:48.

Jesus said that the standard by which we will be judged is *“the word”* that He has spoken. When you stand before God, the Scriptures will be opened, and your actions will be measured against God’s law. Many people say, “Well, in *my* book, this or that thing is O.K.”: but when they stand before God, they will find, to their horror, that God will not judge them according to what *they* said in *their* “book”: He will judge us according to what *He* said in *His* Book! Furthermore, the standard to which we will be held is *utter perfection*.

Read Galatians 3:10-13.

Let these words sink in, my friends. In **verse 10**, Paul said that those who do not continue in *“all things which are written in the book of the law”* are *“cursed.”* By the way, this wasn’t Paul’s idea; Paul was simply quoting what God had told Moses in **Deuteronomy 27:26**. God’s requirement in order to have eternal life is (and always has been) complete and utter moral perfection. If you fall short of the mark of utter holiness, you are under God’s curse, and on your way to hell! My friend, if these words do not send a shiver down your spine, then you do not understand the trouble you are in. I’ll say it again: *God demands utter perfection!*

Now, how can anyone be saved, if God’s standard be utter perfection? It’s simple. God’s remedy for sin is that you place your complete faith in the Son of God. Jesus Christ took your sin and judgment upon Himself, so that you might be redeemed. He took your sin, and the penalty of your sin, upon Himself, so that in exchange, you might have His perfect righteousness stamped on your account. Christ became a *“curse”* for us. Every sin that has ever been committed, or ever will be committed, Jesus paid for it all. He purchased salvation in full, as a free gift. However, there is one responsibility on man’s part: and that is to *receive* the gift, by simple faith and repentance. That is why Paul said, *“The just shall live by faith.”* Those who will not receive the gift of salvation by faith in Jesus will have to pay for every one of their sins; and the payment will be eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire.

Read Revelation 20:11-15.

What we have read in these verses is the ultimate fate of all those who rejected God’s gift of salvation. No child of God will stand at this Great White Throne judgment. Christians will stand before God at *another* judgment, called the Judgment Seat of Christ. When a *Christian’s* sins are recounted at the Judgment Seat of Christ, he will be ashamed, and will hang his head in sorrow; *but*, the books will show that his sins are *“paid in full.”* True Christians will be sad when they realise how *little* they did to serve Christ in this life. They will mourn at how little reward they have received for their service to Christ, and at how few crowns they will have to cast back at Jesus’ feet. Nonetheless, the perfect righteousness of Christ will cover their sins, because they believed on the Son. On the other hand, those who never received the Son will have no covering for their sins; and they will stand before God at the judgment that is described here in **Revelation 20**. They will be judged for *every sin* they have committed; and they will receive eternal torment according to their deeds!

Acts 13:39 says, *“And by him (Jesus) all that believe are justified from all things.”* My friend, have you believed on Jesus, and been justified from all things? Have you been saved from your sins? If not, please don’t put it off! Now is the day of salvation!

II. What is the command? (v. 17)

We've seen *to whom* Peter is writing: He is writing to those who call upon the Father. He is writing to Christians. Having stated this, Peter now gives Christians a command. He says, ***“Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”*** (Read verse 17 again.)

Nothing could be more offensive to the natural mind than this command to ***“Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”*** First of all, the natural mind thinks only of the *present world*. The “old man” (the old sinful nature) thinks only about *this* life. The old man does *not* regard this life as a brief journey on the way to an eternal habitation; rather, the old man regards this life as the *end-all*. The old man says, ***“Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.”*** This life is all that the old man has to live for. Thus, if everything is not going *his* way as he passes through life, the old man grows bitter, and whines, and complains, and blames God. Even we who are saved are capable of having this attitude, because the old man (the sinful nature) is still within us. Even a saved person can be bitter, and whine, and complain, and blame God. However, a believer who is *Spirit-filled* has the attitude that Job had. Though Job was beset by crushing trials, the Bible reports that Job ***“sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”***

Christian, put the old man to death, and allow your mind to be controlled by God's Word. If you will allow Christ to control your thoughts, then you *will* pass the time of your sojourning in fear. You will regard yourself as a citizen of heaven, and an ambassador of the King. You will regard yourself as being stationed in a foreign land for a short time, before being called home! Is this how you view your life? Paul said in **Philippians 3:20**, ***“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”***

Now, please notice *how* we should be passing the time of our sojourn. Peter says that we should pass our time ***“in fear.”*** Again, this defies the natural way of thinking. The world's reaction to this statement is: “What? God wants us to *fear*? Why, fear is a *negative* thing! Don't you realise that fear is hurtful to our psyches? You Christians are mentally imbalanced!” However, regardless of what Dr. Phil, Oprah, and all the hordes of psychologists and New Age gurus have to say, God's Word is clear. The Scriptures command us to *fear God*.

Everyone fears someone, or something; the question is, “Whom (or what) do you fear?” That makes all the difference! The Bible makes it abundantly clear that we are *not* to fear things of this earth. Throughout Scripture, believers are commanded *not* to fear what man can do unto them. **Proverbs 29:25** says, ***“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.”*** It is the LORD whom Christians should fear. Wisdom, knowledge, and *sanity* come from the fear of the LORD. (That is why sanity is fast becoming extinct in our world today. There is almost no fear of God anywhere!) Let's see what Solomon said about the fear of the LORD.

Read Proverbs 1:7.

Do you fear the LORD, Christian? Unfortunately, many Christians do not have nearly as much fear of the LORD as they should. If you have truly placed your faith in Christ, you needn't fear whether or not you are *saved*; but you *should* fear the chastisement that God will bring into your life if you choose to disobey Him! You *should* fear to neglect God's House. You *should* be afraid to neglect reading your Bible, or praying, or tithing, or witnessing to

others. You *should* be afraid to ignore God's specific calling in your life (such as the call to the ministry). Let's see what David had to say about the fear of the LORD.

Read Psalm 34:8-9.

David says that fear of the LORD and trust in the LORD go hand in hand! Those who truly fear God are willing to *trust* Him with their lives. Do *you* trust Him to the extent that you should, Christian? Do you *fear* Him to the extent that you should?

Now, if we are to live our lives in the fear of God, this raises another question:

III. Why should we live our lives in the fear of God? (v. 18)

(**Read verse 18.**) The next question that Peter answers is "Why?" *Why* should Christians live their lives in the fear of God? Well, Peter answers that question at the beginning of **verse 18**. He says, "***Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things.***" That expression "forasmuch as" simply means "because."

So, let's back up and look at this sentence. Peter has just commanded Christians to live their lives in the fear of God. And why? "*Because*" we know that we were not redeemed with corruptible things. What is Peter saying? He's saying that the realisation that we did not redeem ourselves should produce fear of the LORD in our lives! If we *had* been able to purchase our salvation with corruptible, earthly thing (such as "*silver or gold*"), then we would not really feel any obligation to live in the fear of God. Why? Because we did it all ourselves! We purchased our *own* salvation. Why would we feel any sense of obligation to love, trust, or truly fear God, if we could buy our own way into heaven? We wouldn't! Such a salvation would not produce holiness: it would produce great wickedness!

Back during the Middle Ages, when the Roman Catholic Church needed lots of cash to build the St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, the sale of "indulgences" was in its heyday. The priests assured the people that for varying sums of money, they could commit different kinds of sins, and be forgiven of those sins in advance. Now, this produced much holiness, right? Not on your life! In fact, sometimes people would buy their indulgence; and then, as soon as the paper was in their hand, they would pull out a sword or musket, and order the priest to hand over all the money that was in his possession! Why did people think they could get away with this crime? Because they had just paid, in advance, for absolution from the sin of robbery! This goes to show that people who believe in salvation through works do not have true fear of God. A "pay your own way" salvation produces the *opposite* of holiness. People who believe they can do good works, or make certain sacrifices, in order to earn their salvation, will feel free to "indulge" in their favourite sin, and "make up for it" with good works or sacrifices. Why? Because in their mind, *God* is not the Author of their salvation; *they* are!

Let's put this on an earthly level. Let's say that you've fallen upon really hard times. You've lost your job. You have crushing bills hanging over your head; you can't pay your mortgage; and you are about to lose your house. You can't even afford to rent the cheapest apartment. On top of it all, you have recently suffered a serious accident, which has rendered you disabled, and unable to work. But then, a rich stranger, whom you never knew before, sees your plight, and steps in. He pays all your debts; and he bequeaths to you his entire fortune. Obviously, you cannot pay him back for what he has done; and he doesn't expect you to pay

him even one cent. **However, would you feel just the teensiest bit of obligation to thank him?** If he had a simple request, would you feel that you should do it, simply because you care about this person who cared so much for you? In fact, wouldn't you feel that you should become his friend, since he wants to be *your* friend? I surely hope you would!

This may sound like an “over-the-top” illustration; but in reality, it falls miserably short of illustrating the free gift of salvation that God has provided for us. This illustration can barely even *begin* to convey what Christ has done for us. We were not redeemed from sin and its penalty by paying money for indulgences, or for soul-masses. We were not redeemed by *any* corruptible thing. Redemption is the precious purchase of God on our behalf.

Read Psalm 49:6-9.

Nothing that *we* can do, or offer to God, can redeem our souls. Our redemption is entirely the work of God. We cannot *repay* Him even one mite for what He was done for us. However, we *do* have an obligation to fear God—not *in order* to be saved, but *because* He has saved us. It is simply the right and reasonable thing to do. Paul wrote in **Romans 12:1-2**, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*” John said that because we love God, “*his commandments are not grievous*” to us. It should not be a drudgery for a Christian to serve God. Instead, it should be our pleasure to make every day of our lives a giant “thank you note” to God!

IV. How was redemption made possible for the redeemed? (v. 19)

(Read verse 19.) In this verse, Peter answers the question, “How?” *How* has Redemption been made possible for us? It has been made possible through the Passover Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. It has been made possible through the blood that He shed on the cross. There is no other way! Jesus is the Redeemer; and His blood had to be shed in order for us to be redeemed! The Bible says that the “*life of the flesh is in the blood.*” Jesus’ life’s blood had to be shed in *my* place, in order to atone for *my* life. Those who deny that Jesus had to shed His blood in order to save us are lost, and do not know Him.

By the way, when it comes to the doctrine of the blood of Christ, it *does* matter which version of the Bible you use. For example, in *Today’s English Bible*, the words “*precious blood*” here in **1 Peter 1:19** are changed to “*costly sacrifice.*” Folks, the Greek word that is used here is *haima* (“blood”). There is no getting around it: the change to “costly sacrifice” is a deliberate alteration of God’s Word. The translators are downplaying the importance of Christ’s blood.

By the way, every version *except* the King James downplays the importance of Christ’s blood. For instance, the *Good News for Modern Man* omits the word “blood” 36 of the 103 times that it is used in the New Testament. Nearly *all* the modern versions omit the word “blood” about that many times. Even the *New King James Version* omits the word “blood” 24 times! Why? Because man doesn’t like to hear that salvation is through the blood of Christ. It isn’t sanitary. It isn’t cultured. It isn’t sophisticated. However, God says that the blood of Christ it is the only way of salvation. **Hebrews 9:22** says, “*Without shedding of blood is no remission.*”

Man's pride is struck down when he finds that his salvation required nothing less than the death of the sinless Son of God, and the shedding of His precious blood. The awful cost of our redemption shows us just how bad our sin really is! Our sin condemns us. That is why redemption is possible *only* through the "precious blood of the Lamb."

V. **When was the Redeemer ordained? (v. 20)**

(Read verse 20.) In this verse, Peter answers the question "When?" *When* was the Redeemer ordained to redeem us? The answer is: ***"Before the foundation of the world."*** **(Read verse 20.)** From eternity past, the Father had chosen the Son to redeem mankind; and the Son was in submission to His Father's will. All three members of the Godhead were eternally in agreement about the plan of our redemption. Infinitely long before there was such a thing as "time," the Son of God was foreordained to step into time and space, at the right moment in human history; and then to become our Redeemer, by dying on the cross for us!

Read Galatians 4:4-5.

Never lose the wonder of your redemption, brethren! It is unfathomable! **Paul** exclaimed in **Romans 11:33**, ***"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"***

VI. **Where should the redeemed place their trust? (v. 21)**

The last question that Peter answers in his report is "Where?" *Where* should the redeemed place their trust? Well, let's read **verse 21**. **(Read verse 21.)** Peter says that our complete faith and hope is in God. Where else *could* it be? The Lord did all the work for our redemption on the cross, all by Himself. He left nothing for us to do. Three days later, the Father ***"gave him glory."*** He raised up His Son from the dead, and thus sealed our salvation. We had no part in providing our own redemption. It is for us simply to humble ourselves, admit our need of redemption, and *let* Him redeem us! Our *entire hope* rests in our Redeemer!

Peter couldn't have said it any simpler than he did back in **John 6**. Remember what Peter said to Jesus on the day when most of His disciples left Him? Let's take a look.

Read John 6:60-69.

On this day, Jesus lost a boatload of so-called "disciples." Yet, He was not the least bit daunted. He turned to the twelve disciples and said, ***"Will ye also go away?"*** Now, Peter was probably feeling somewhat bewildered by the mass exodus of people he had just seen. Nevertheless, Peter said, ***"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."***

Christian, all your hope, both in this life, and in the life to come, rests upon your Redeemer, Jesus Christ. He is your Hope for eternity; and He is your reason for living. When you are assailed by temptations, He is your Deliverance from those temptations. When trials come firing at you like arrows, He is your High Tower. He is your Refuge—the One who will guard and protect you, and meet your every need. When friends and loved ones forsake you because of your faith in Christ, He is the One who will comfort and sustain you. And when you finally pass from this life, He will guide you safely to the Golden Shore!

Conclusion: The Apostle Peter has given us his report. First, he has told us to *whom* he is writing: he is writing to those who are saved. He has told us *what* God expects the saved to do: **namely, to pass the time of our sojourn on earth in the fear of God.** He has told us *why* we should fear God: because we did not earn our own salvation. He has told us *how* we were saved: through the precious blood of Christ. He has told us *when* the Redeemer was ordained to redeem us: before the foundation of the world. And, he has told us *where* the redeemed should place their trust: In their Redeemer, Jesus Christ! Have you placed your trust in Him? Are you saved? If you are saved, are you living your life in full surrender to Him? If not, surrender yourself wholly to Him today!